

DFS QUARTERLY

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Safety & Survival - 2000 and Beyond

Through the efforts of the Secretary of Public Safety Jane Perlov and with the support of the major fire service organizations of the commonwealth, Governor Cellucci and the Massachusetts Legislature have provided \$10 million dollars to enhance the safety of the firefighters in the cities, towns and fire districts of Massachusetts. A portion of those funds will go to the Massachusetts Firefighting Academy for the purpose of increasing the number of safety related firefighter training programs available to cities, towns and fire districts in the Commonwealth.

The Firefighting Academy is a leader in the fire training field with a reputation for high quality programming. This increase in funding will allow the academy to maintain the level of programming to which the departments are accustomed, while offering additional deliveries of nationally recognized seminars and locally developed programs aimed specifically at reducing the threats to our firefighters and improving firefighter safety. To set this effort apart from the other high quality offerings of the Firefighting Academy we call this: *Safety & Survival - 2000 and Beyond*.

The first two presentations of these programs *FDNY Back to Basics* and *Chicago FD Firefighter Rescue and Survival* have already been conducted in the Commonwealth once each this fiscal year. Other training programs scheduled to be conducted under this initiative include flashover simulator training, table top incident command exercises,

firefighter accountability practices, firefighter rehab, terrorism preparedness, emergency vehicle operation and a host of other programs which directly address those situations which injure and kill firefighters every year.



Advertising posters are being printed for distribution to every fire station in the commonwealth and periodic updates for these posters will be mailed to chiefs of department on a regular basis. We encourage all firefighters in the commonwealth to join us in this worthwhile effort. Lives depend on it. ♦

Governor's Special Achievement Award

Worcester Cold Storage and Warehouse Company Fire Fighting and Recovery Team

The Department of Fire Services, as part of the Worcester Cold Storage Fire Fighting and Recovery Team, has been selected to receive the Governor's Special Achievement Award. This award recognized the employees whose job performance has made a significant impact on the commonwealth and improved the quality of life for our citizens. Each and every employee of the Department of Fire Services should share in the pride of this award. The team consisted of various state and local employees who were honored for their work in the fire fighting and recovery effort during the December 3, 1999 fire.

From December 3 through December 11, 1999, members of the Worcester
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From the Desk of the Fire Marshal

Stephen D. Coan

The end of the year is always a good time to sit back and reflect on the distance traveled in the past twelve months. Often it is only by looking backwards to where we were a year ago that we can actually see how far we've come.

S.A.F.E. Grants Awarded During FPW

The S.A.F.E. Grant award letters were sent out during Fire Prevention Week, which was the target date staff at the Department of Fire Services had set for themselves. This year 225 fire departments are participating in the S.A.F.E. Program. I have been extremely fortunate to attend several "young hero" award ceremonies so far this year, confirming once again, that public fire education works. We have set April 26 as the date for a State House ceremony to honor all the "Young Heroes" from the S.A.F.E. Program. There are over 100 young heroes known to us so far.

2000 Firefighter of the Year Awards

The 2000 Firefighter of the Year awards ceremony honored firefighters across the state for acts of heroism and bravery. Gold medals of valor were awarded to the six Worcester firefighters we lost last December and presented to their families. A silver medal of valor was also presented posthumously to

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From the Fire Marshal *continued from page 1*

Deputy John Murphy of Russell, who also died fighting a fire last year. This extremely moving ceremony was held in historic Mechanics' Hall in Worcester. It is hoped that this ceremony will start to bring some closure for the Worcester families and firefighters who have been asked to share their grief so publicly.

\$10 Million Grant for Firefighter Safety Equipment

These brave families have also helped us advocate for initiatives to improve firefighter safety in the nation and the state. They traveled with representatives of the Massachusetts fire service to Washington to advocate for the federal Fire Act, a version of which finally passed. They joined us on Beacon Hill to advocate for the \$10 million grant program for firefighter safety equipment. I am personally grateful for the enormous support from the Legislature and this administration to substantively help increase the safety of firefighters. The grant applications have just been mailed to local fire departments and the funding provides \$13,000 to each fire department. Fire departments can purchase thermal imaging equipment or other safety equipment with the funding. It is important for chiefs to

immediately fill out their application and send in their intent to participate in this program.

Firefighter Safety & Survival – 2000 and Beyond

We have launched a new training initiative called *Firefighter Safety & Survival – 2000 and Beyond*, which focuses the best firefighter safety training the MFA has to offer and the best national programs we could find, into a single package. I hope that all firefighters across the state will take advantage of this training initiative.

Incident Support Unit

This year the DFS was also able to purchase, to equip, and to staff an *Incident Support Unit*. This unit will be available, by request of the local fire chief, to assist at major incidents like the Worcester Cold Warehouse fire, the 1999 Hull fire, or the aftermath of the Berkshire County tornado.

Regulation Changes on Vacant Buildings

This month two major regulation changes affecting the boarding up of vacant buildings and the marking of vacant buildings for fire suppression

incident commanders were passed. The Board of Fire Prevention Regulations on Monday, December 11, passed an emergency amendment to require a simple, statewide, uniform marking system of vacant buildings. The marking system requires a joint inspection by fire and building officials to determine whether or not it is unsafe for firefighters to conduct an interior attack. The Board of Building Regulations and Standards at its December 12 meeting also passed a parallel emergency amendment on the inspection and marking of vacant buildings. Most importantly though, the BBRS passed an emergency amendment requiring vacant buildings to be boarded up using the so-called HUD method. This method is the most effective known and is difficult for vandals to penetrate. This is a major step forward in the war on arson.

We've come a long way in twelve months and have taken many steps that we can all be proud of that will help prevent fires and make fighting those that do occur safer for the men and women of the Massachusetts fire service. ♦

New Counter-Terrorism Courses

The Massachusetts Firefighting Academy, through a grant from the United States Fire Administration, is offering two new Counter-Terrorism courses:

- 1. Emergency Response to Terrorism - Tactical Considerations - Emergency Medical Services (ERT-TC-EMS)**
- 2. Emergency Response to Terrorism - Tactical Considerations - Company Officer.**

Both classes are two days each, and have been approved for OEMS continuing

education hours.

The classes are designed to increase the first responders chance to survive a terrorist incident, increase a first responders ability to anticipate potential incident targets, increase a department's ability to respond effectively, and increase a first responder skills level to work in a team setting (Unified Command) to address terrorist incidents.

If any department is interested in hosting a class or classes, please contact Martin Greene, Hazardous Materials Training Group Coordinator at 978-567-3209. ♦



Fire Officer Training Group News

The first offering of *Fire Officer Supervisory Training* took place October 21-24. This replaces the former program *Fire Officer 1 Skills Development*. The new program is based on the IFSTA Fire Department Company Officer 3rd edition. It is a 60-hour classroom presentation which includes some lecture and group activities to reinforce the lesson and reading. This is a tested course, so the successful student receives a certificate of completion which may be accepted for credit by community colleges. We had 47 applicants for the first class that was hosted by the Stoughton Fire Department, 30 were accepted. We have other offerings in the planning stages, with our goal this fiscal year to complete six programs.

To accomplish this goal we will need students, but first we must increase our instructor staff. Further information on both of these issues can be obtained by calling the Fire Officer Training Group at 978-567-3217.

Advance Leadership Training

This program is being offered twice this fiscal year. The first offering was in Westford on November 1, 2, 8, 9, 15 & 16. The next offering will be in the spring with a tentative location in Concord. This 36-hour program is the second level of fire officer training designed to help the fire officer deal with issues bigger than just running the company. It will assist the student in developing the skill to think outside the box and recognize all the factors that play a role in fire department operations.

District Deliveries

This area allows us to provide specific officer level training in 12-hour blocks to fire departments. This is coordinated between the county training chief and the program manager at the fire academy. Questions on the procedure to host one of these should be directed to Everett Pierce, while questions on the courses offered or on course content should be directed to the fire officer group. ♦

Governor's Special Award *Continued from page 1*

Cold Storage and Warehouse Company Fire Fighting and Recovery team worked together to extinguish the fire and to provide assistance and support to those men and women dedicated to recovering the six fallen heroes. Dozens of agencies, including the Worcester Fire Department, Worcester Police Department, the City of Worcester, Office of the Chief Medical Examiner, Department of Fire Services, Department of Mental Health – Worcester State Hospital, Executive Office of Public Safety, Department of State Police, Massachusetts Emergency Management Agency, Mass Highway Department, Massachusetts Turnpike Authority, Department of Corrections, Massachusetts Corps of Fire Chaplains, Worcester Fire Firefighters, Local 1009, Fire Chiefs Association of MA and Professional Fire Fighters of MA, were among those that made up this dedicated and selfless team.

The exceptional dedication to their professions and commitment to helping others in a time of crisis was well demonstrated by the provision of support given to the victims and survivors of the fatal fire. The team members are heroes for many reasons. The work they do daily is reason enough, but to regularly provide extraordinary services to the community without seeking any recognition speaks to the character and leadership of every member of the team. For the team members who lost their lives in pursuit of saving others, we acknowledge their acts of bravery, courage and loyalty to their fellow citizens. The Worcester blaze will stand out in Massachusetts history, not only for the loss of the six firefighters, but because of the immense cooperative effort that took place during the entire mobilization put forth by the Worcester Cold Storage and Warehouse Company Fire Fighting and Recovery Team. ♦

Update on Blasting Incidents

In the last DFS Quarterly an article titled "Blasting Incidents on the Rise!" talked about an increase in blasting incidents in the previous 7 – 8 months. As a result of that and other articles being published, there have been a number of discussions with the blasting industry regarding this troubling trend. Interestingly, the industry as a whole had not been aware of the extent and seriousness of the incidents that have taken place. After these discussions, it is clear that there is mutual interest in reversing this trend and reducing both the number and seriousness of these incidents.

An item that is somewhat troubling to report in this article is that to date

there have been eight (8) personal injuries as a result of the use of explosives since the first of this year. These injuries range from minor, with no medical attention required, to serious. In general terms, the causes of these injuries are as a result of flyrock, or the mishandling of explosives.

The question of cause always arises with any type of blasting incident. Discussions with the blasting industry have focused on exactly that question. Two issues that seemed to surface when discussing causes of blasting related injuries were training and good decision making. Hopefully, those two issues are now the

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Blasting License and User's Certificate Suspensions

In response to numerous inquiries regarding verification of licenses the following advice is offered. First, any fire department in the commonwealth should feel free to call our licensing staff or code compliance officers at any time to verify that the licensee is in good standing with the commonwealth - (978) 567-3300. Second, it is important for fire departments to understand what actions are taken by the Office of the State Fire Marshal when a license or certificate is suspended or revoked.

Insist on Seeing a Valid License at Permit Application Time

Should the Office of the State Fire Marshal, through the code compliance and enforcement officers, encounter an "eminent threat", or a licensee who poses a public safety risk during an investigation, that person's license is immediately removed from his possession. While these instances are infrequent, some have occurred. At that point the licensee is "out of service" until an administrative hearing is scheduled. That licensee would at that point no longer be able to apply for a

permit, as the presentation of the license is a key part of the permit application process. The licensee would also no longer be able to conduct further operations under a permit issued in his or her name without risk of more serious criminal charges.

A similar scenario exists when a licensee has had his or her license suspended or revoked as a result of the outcome of an administrative hearing. That license or certificate is retrieved from the individual and kept in the possession of the Office of the State Fire Marshal until the suspension is served or permanently, if revoked. Should a license or certificate be permanently revoked, the fire departments will be notified immediately through an advisory. Current information regarding suspensions or revocations will also be published in the *DFS Quarterly*.



With all of that said, it is very difficult for the "out of service" licensee to present a department with a license or certificate unless it is an expired one, or it is forged. Once again, a licensee would be exposed to exceptional regulatory risk if an attempt was made to appear as properly licensed while under some type of suspension. ♦

License Action by the Department of Fire Services

Blasting Licenses

Vernon DeMoranville	BL 002550	Suspended pending retest
Ray Lizotte	BL 003943	Revoked
Don Yebba	BL 003462	Pending a decision of the Marshal
Kevin MacDonald	BL 003946	Suspended pending hearing; Pled guilty to criminal charges, illegal transportation
Larry Laford	BL 003261	Suspended 6 months; Retest required
Kevin M. Falvey	BL 003847	Suspended for 30 days; Retest required
Patrick O'Connor	BL 003496	Suspended for 2 years; Pled to sufficient facts -flyrock, other charges; Retest required

Blasting Users Certificate

Exquisite Craft Development Corp.	EU 329	Suspended pending a hearing
Granite Rock Drilling and Blasting	EU 213	Revoked

Fire Suppression Contractors

Robert V. Choquette	FE000221	Suspended pending reinstatement
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NEWS FROM CPSC

The following are excerpts from press releases issued by the U. S. Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC) regarding products recalled for

fire or burn hazards. Consumers should immediately stop using any of these products and contact the U. S. Consumer Product Safety Commission

or the manufacturer for instructions on how to proceed. ♦



Release #00-176 August 31, 2000

Empire Industries Announces Recall of Children's Riding Vehicles

Empire Industries, of Tarboro, N.C., is recalling about 113,000 battery-powered children's riding vehicles, marketed as "Power Drivers" or "Buddy L", for repair. The vehicles' battery chargers can overheat, presenting fire and injury hazards to children.

CPSC and Empire have received about 100 reports of chargers overheating, melting or burning. Five house fires have been reported resulting in at least \$100,000 in property damage. One child and one adult received burns to hands on overheated charger jacks.

The Power Drive vehicles being recalled are powered by two 6-volt batteries, and were manufactured from July 1995 to December 1996. The vehicles are made of plastic and were sold under the following model names: Go-Kart, Beach Splash, Sun Dream, Trail Tracker, Rescue Patrol and Chevy Z-71 Pick-Up Truck.

Toy stores and retail catalogs sold the vehicles nationwide from July 1995 through December 1997 for about \$130 to \$250.



Release #00-177 August 31, 2000

Tek Nek Toys Announces Recall of Children's Riding Vehicles

Tek Nek Toys, of Mokena, IL, is recalling about 294,000 battery-powered children's riding vehicles to replace the battery chargers. The vehicles' battery charger or wires can overheat, presenting fire and injury hazards to children.

CPSC and Tek Nek have received 17 reports of battery chargers and wires overheating, while vehicles were being charged. Two consumers burned their hands while unplugging or charging the vehicles.

The Tek Nek vehicles being recalled are powered by one 6-volt battery and were manufactured before April 2000. The vehicles are made of plastic and were sold under the following model names: Prowler, Dodge Ram, Corvette, SPX Motorcycle and Honda.

Toy stores and discount department stores sold the vehicles nationwide from July 1998 through April 2000 for about \$89.



Release #00-161 August 10, 2000

Williams-Sonoma Inc. Announces Recall of Portable Gas Grills

Williams-Sonoma Inc. of San Francisco, CA, is voluntarily recalling about 950 portable propane gas grills, called the Suitcase Grill. The grills can be difficult or impossible to turn off and the temperature control can malfunction.

Williams-Sonoma and CPSC have received two reports of consumers being unable to shut off the propane flow. No injuries have been reported.

The grill is made of rust-resistant stainless steel and folds like a suitcase, with built-in handles. It measures 23 inches long by 8 inches high. The grill has a 20,000-BTU propane-gas burner with adjustable temperature controls. The control is a black round knob with white writing that reads in part "HIGH, LOW, MED, OFF". A label on the grill reads "Model #15-3597291, READ INSTRUCTIONS BEFORE LIGHTING, and MADE IN CHINA."

Williams-Sonoma store, in addition to the Williams-Sonoma catalog and web site, sold the grills nationwide from March 2000 through July 2000 for about \$200.

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Release #00-165 August 17, 2000

Penray Companies Inc. Announces Recall of Starting Fluid

The Penray Company, Inc., of Wheeling, IL is recalling about 113,000 cans of starting fluid, which is a lubricant to aid starting gas and diesel engines. The cans containing the starting fluid can leak as a result of internal to external corrosion. The starting fluid is extremely flammable and the leaking fluid posed a fire hazard. Direct contact with the product also can irritate the consumer's eyes and skin.

Penray has received three reports of cans of starting fluid leaking. No injuries have been reported.

The recalled starting fluid was sold under the Penray, Super-X and Service Pro brand names in 10.1 ounce cans. The recalled cans have a number printed on the dome of the can ranging from 9305 through 9365. For consumers who purchased the starting fluid by the case, the production date is written on the side of the case. The cans are mostly black with white and red writing and black plastic caps.

Automobile repair and rebuild shops sold the starting fluid nationwide from November 1999 through August 2000 for \$2 to \$3.



Release #00-155 September 14, 2000

Vaid Enterprises Announces Recall of "BIC" Cigarette Lighters

Vaid Enterprises, of Jersey City, NJ, is recalling about 294, 000 disposable cigarette lighters. The lighters do not have child-resistant mechanisms, as required by federal law. Young children could ignite the lighter, presenting fire and burn hazards.

CPSC and Vaid Enterprises are not aware of any injuries involving these cigarette lighters. This recall is being conducted to prevent the possibility of injuries.

The disposable cigarette lighters being recalled are oval-tube-shaped "BIC" and mini-"BIC" brand lighters. The lighters have a green, red, blue, black or yellow body and a metal top. "BIC" and "made in France" is imprinted into the metal top of the lighter. A label on the lighter reads "Warning Keep Away From Children". The standard size lighters have the UPC number 3086120600020 and the mini-lighters have the UPC number 3086123600051.

Convenience, gas, grocery and thrift stores in the Eastern U.S. sold these disposable cigarette lighters from January 2000 through April 2000 for about \$1.



Release #00-189 September 28, 2000

Halpern Import Co. Announces Recall of Cigarette Lighters

Halpern Import CO. Inc., of Atlanta, GA is recalling about 350,000 disposable cigarette lighters. These lighters can burn with a high flame and can fail to extinguish, presenting fire and burn hazards.

CPSC and Halpern Import Co. have received one report of a woman who received second degree burns on her chest when the lighter failed to extinguish and ignited her clothing.

The disposable cigarette lighters being recalled are oval-tube-shaped. "Turbo 2000" is printed on the body of the lighter. The lighters have a green, red, blue, black or yellow body and a metal top. A label on the lighter reads "Child-Resistant Disposable Lighter", "Keep Out of Reach of Children", and "Made in China". UPC number 080692050101 is printed on the back of the lighters.

Tobacco and thrift stores nationwide sold these lighters from June 1999 through May 2000 for about \$1.

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Release #00-188 September 27, 2000

BRK Announces Recall of First Alert Fire Extinguishers

BRK Brands, Inc., of Aurora, IL, is voluntarily recalling about 600,000 First Alert™ household fire extinguishers. The extinguishers can fail to discharge when the trigger is activated failing to put out a fire, which puts the consumers at risk of fire-related injuries.

CPSC and BRK have received five reports from consumers of the fire extinguishers failing to discharge when activated. No injuries have been reported.

Only First Alert™ model FE1A10G with serial numbers beginning with: RH, RK, RI, RP, RT, RU and RW are included in this recall. The serial number is located on the extinguisher's label, above the model number in a rectangular box. "First Alert" is written on the units' label and pressure gauge. The fire extinguishers are either red or white. Home centers, mass merchandisers, and hardware stores nationwide sold the fire extinguishers from September 1999 through September 2000 for between \$9 and \$15.



Release #00-013 October 13, 2000

Dell Announces Recall of Batteries for Notebook-Computers

Dell Computer Corp., of Round Rock, TX, is voluntarily recalling about 27,000 batteries used in notebook-style personal computers. These batteries can short-circuit, even when the battery is not in use, causing them to become very hot, release smoke and possibly catch fire.

Dell has received one report of a battery in a Dell computer short-circuiting and catching fire. The incident resulted in minor property damage. No injuries were reported.

The recalled batteries were sold with the following Dell Notebook computers: Latitude CPiA, CPiR, CPtC, CPtS, CPtV, CPxH and CPxJ and Inspiron 3700 and 3800. The batteries also were sold separately, including in response to service calls. The batteries insert into the front-left and/or front-right of the computer. "DELL™" and "Made in Japan" are written on the batteries. The batteries' identification number is written on a white sticker. Consumers should have this number available when they contact Dell to determine if their battery is part of the recall.

Dell's web site and catalogs sold computers with these batteries, customer kits containing the batteries, and individual batteries from June 2000 through mid-September 2000. The computers with these batteries were sold for between \$1,500 and \$3,000, and individual batteries were sold for between \$100 and \$170.



Release #01-022 October 27, 2000

Compaq Announces Recall of Notebook Computer Battery Packs and Batteries

Compaq Computer Corp., of Houston, TX, is voluntarily recalling for replacement about 55,000 battery packs used with Compaq's Armada notebook computers. These battery packs can short circuit, causing them to overheat, release smoke and possibly catch fire.

Compaq has received one report of a battery pack overheating, and damaging the notebook computer. No injuries were reported.

The recalled battery packs were sold with Compaq's Armada E200 and V300 notebook computers. Writing on the batteries include "Compaq" and "Assembled in Taiwan". The battery pack can be identified by a date code and serial number on the white label to the right of the battery connector.

Date Code TCGK with a serial number from 00001 to 10500, 20001 to 21800, and 40001 to 83100, or date code TCGK with a serial number from 40001 to 44700.

Compaq dealers sold these battery packs worldwide with notebook computers and separately from June 2000 through July 2000. The notebook computers sold for between \$1,800 and \$3,800, and the individual Batteries sold for about \$165.

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Release #01-018 October 25, 2000

Toro Co. Announces Recall of Lawn Mowers

The Toro Co., of Bloomington, MN, is recalling about 23,000 Toro Key Start Power Mowers. The wiring on these mowers can short circuit, posing a fire hazard.

Toro has received eight reports of wiring on these mowers shorting out. No injuries have been reported.

The recalled Toro Key Start mowers are model 20045, gasoline-powered, walk-behind mowers with a 21-inch cutting blade. The model number is on a decal on the right rear of the mower housing.

Toro dealers nationwide sold these mowers from February 1999 through September 2000 for about \$590.



Release #01-024 November 6, 2000

Five-Y Clothing Announces Recall of Fleece Sweatshirts Sold at Kmart

Five-Y Clothing Inc., of Miami, FL, is recalling about 42,000 Fleece Sweatshirts. These garments, which fail to meet the federal mandatory standards for fabric flammability, could ignite easily and present a serious risk of burn injuries.

CPSC, and Five-Y Clothing are not aware of any injuries involving these sweatshirts. This recall is being conducted to prevent the possibility of injuries.

The recalled ladies' sweatshirts are made of a fleece fabric that closely resembles that of an inside-outside sweatshirt. They are long-sleeved, pullover-style, gray, and 90 percent cotton and 10 percent polyester. A label sewn into the neck of the sweatshirts reads in part, "Route 66 Original Clothing," "Made in El Salvador," and "R.N. 94401."

Kmart Stores nationwide exclusively sold the ladies sweatshirts from June 1999 through March 2000 for about \$9.

Release #01-026 November 2, 2000

Child-Resistant Lighters Bring Down Fire Deaths; CPSC Reports Shows 43% Decline in Deaths from Lighter Fires

A federal safety standard requiring lighters to be child-resistant has led to dramatic decreases in fires, deaths and injuries, according to a report issued today by the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission.

The new report shows that fire deaths associated with children playing with lighters dropped 43 percent since the CPSC required cigarette lighters to be child-resistant starting in 1994. Deaths related to children playing with lighters fell from 230 in 1994 to 130 in 1998. Children under age 5 accounted for 170 of the deaths in 1994 and 40 of the deaths in 1998.

Overall, fires related to lighters dropped by 45 percent between 1994 and 1998. In 1994, there were 11,100 residential fires associated with children playing with lighters. By 1998, that number declined to 6,100 fires. By comparison, residential structure fires due to other causes decreased by 15 percent in that period.

Injuries related to lighter fires also declined. Injuries dropped 49 percent, from 1,600 in 1994 to 810 in 1998.

The study estimates that 4,800 fires, 130 deaths, 950 injuries and \$76.4 million in property damage were prevented because cigarette lighter safety standard in 1998 alone.

The cigarette lighter safety standard requires disposable and novelty lighters to have a child-resistant mechanism that makes lighters difficult for children younger than 5 to operate. At the time the standard was developed, it was estimated that children younger than 5 ignited 73 percent of all residential structure fires started by children playing with cigarette lighters.

Release # 01-054 December 14,

**GE Recall Hotline:
(800) 599-2929**

GE Announces Free Repair Supplement of Rebate Program for Recalled Dishwashers: Recalled Units Still Being Used, Creating Risk of Fire

General Electric Appliances Co., of Louisville, Ky., is voluntarily offering a free repair option in the form of a rewiring for its recalled GE and Hotpoint dishwashers. With the free rewire option, a GE-authorized technician will rewire the slide switch at no cost to consumers.

This supplements the original rebate program announced October 19, 1999. The dishwashers have a slide switch that can melt and ignite, presenting a fire hazard. CPSC is aware of approximately 90 incidents associated with these dishwashers. GE manufactured 3.1 million of these dishwashers between 1983 and 1989. In the recall announced last year, GE provided consumers with a rebate toward the purchase of a new dishwasher. CPSC and GE are announcing the supplemental rewiring option to increase the effectiveness of the original program, which has to date been implemented in over 628,000 units.

CPSC and GE are cooperating in an effort to reach people who may not have previously come forward. Both the CPSC and GE strongly urge consumers who have not replaced their recalled units under the original rebate program to contact GE right away to



schedule a free rewiring or participate in the original rebate program. Until the dishwasher has been rewired, consumers should keep the dishwasher door unlatched at all times to prevent the flow of electrical current that creates a risk of fire. The slide switch allows consumers to choose between heated drying and "energy saver" functions. Over time, the slide switch can melt and ignite, presenting a fire hazard. In the free rewiring program announced today, GE-authorized technicians will rewire the slide switch, eliminating it from the electrical circuit and thereby eliminating the fire risk.

There have been approximately 90 incidents of fire, smoking and melted switches, 14 of which included fires that spread beyond the dishwasher. Approximately 10 incidents have occurred since the recall announcement. No injuries have been reported.

The GE and Hotpoint dishwashers involved are models beginning with GSD500D, GSD500G, GSD540, HDA467, HDA477, or HDA487 with a serial number that has a second letter of A, M, R, S, T, V or Z (for example, BM12345). The model and serial numbers are located on a rectangular label that is on either the right or left front edge of the inner tub. The GE or Hotpoint brand name is on the front of the dishwasher.

Consumers that have one of these recalled dishwashers should immediately discontinue use, unlatch the door, and contact GE at 1-800-599-2929 anytime or at www.geappliancerecall.com. To see a picture of the recalled product(s) and/or to establish a link from your web site to this press release on CPSC's web site, link to the following address: <http://www.cpsc.gov/cpscpub/prerel/prhtml01/01054.html>. ♦

Alternative Heating Fires

To date in calendar 2000, there have been five fatal fires from space heaters that have caused ten deaths. One took place in January, three took place the week after Thanksgiving and the fifth in mid-December.

The last time we had any fatal fires caused by space heaters was in 1997.

So far this heating season, we have not had any fatal fires from chimneys or woodstoves.

The fire service has been talking all fall about its heightened concern that the high cost of home heating fuels would lead to an increase in the use of alternative heating sources such as woodstoves, coal stoves, space heaters and possibly even illegal, unvented liquid-fired (e.g. kerosene) space heaters and that this increased use would also lead to an increase in fires and casualties. Unfortunately these fears have become reality already and we can probably expect more this season.

It is essential to educate the public on how to use these items safely. It is essential to work closely with other government agencies and non-governmental organizations that can provide home heating assistance and ensure that all landlords provide heat or properly maintained systems to provide heat (depending on the rental agreement) to tenants. Many mayor's offices have hotline numbers to deal specifically with this issue.

State Fire Marshal Coan has prepared a FireFactors on space heaters for distribution and has statistics on fires caused by all heating sources in 1999 for use by local fire departments. Please contact the Fire Data and Public Education Unit for either. ♦

Construction Affidavits from Architects and Engineers

The Massachusetts State Building Code (780 CMR) requires that registered architects and registered professional engineers who have prepared plans, computations, and specifications shall review for design conformance as related to the code. They are also required to review construction to determine that the work being performed is consistent with the construction documents for the portion of the work for which they are directly responsible. Upon completion of the work, the registered architect or professional engineer should be filing a final report indicating that the work has been performed in accordance with the approved plans and 780 CMR. It is becoming apparent to local building and fire officials that some architects and engineers are writing these affidavits without having done a complete inspection to verify that the work was done properly.

A local fire department recently encountered a situation which demonstrated the failure of a professional engineer to completely inspect the work for which he was responsible. The building being inspected to obtain occupancy was a new four-story office building with a cafeteria on the first floor. The cafeteria included cooking facilities with the required exhaust hood, exhaust duct, and fire suppression system under the hood. The exhaust duct extended up through the building and terminated above the roof. The local fire official received a stamped, signed affidavit from the engineer of record confirming that the exhaust duct was installed as per code requirements. The fire official inspected the construction of the duct and found that it did not meet code requirements. The fire official then consulted with the responsible engineer about the failure to construct according to code and was led into another problem. The engineer that performed the final inspection

(who admitted to not performing a complete inspection) stated that he is not certified in Massachusetts and therefore found it necessary to have another member of his firm who is certified in Massachusetts stamp and sign the inspection affidavit. The fire official then faced two problems: (1) what should be done about the code violation, and (2) what should be done about the engineer who didn't perform the inspection as required by the code? The answer to the first question was straightforward – no occupancy until the duct construction was corrected to meet code requirements. The answer to the second question was more difficult since it's an issue that does not frequently arise.

The correct procedure for reporting an architect or professional engineer who has violated the provisions of 780 CMR is to put together a letter to the State Board of Registration with a copy to the State Fire Marshal (if the violation relates to any item in 780 CMR 9). The Office of the State Fire Marshal is working on these issues with the Board of Registration. The letter should describe in detail what code violation was discovered as related to the architect or engineer. Note the applicable code and section, and also the NFPA or other standard referenced. This documentation will place the architect or engineer on record as having violated Massachusetts State Building Code requirements. Building and fire officials should become familiar with and use this procedure of reporting individuals who do not comply with the code. Professional engineers and architects need to be made aware that they are being observed by code officials and that their full cooperation with the State Building Code is needed to help insure the safety of the people who will live and work in the commonwealth's buildings. ♦

Update on Blasting Incidents *Continued from page 3*

focus of corrective measures within the blasting industry. While training is not an immediate solution, it is an item that can have an impact in the long-term. Good decision making is very much the short-term solution where blasters in the field and company managers can take a much closer look at their daily operations and make sure they are paying close attention to the critical details.

There is a very aggressive climate in the construction industry these days. This "fast track" approach could be playing a part in some of the decisions that blasters are making. Many of these incidents involve fairly experienced blasters. Some of these blasters have, in fact, gone for great lengths of time without a serious blasting incident. So it may be that overconfidence is part of the decision-making equation as well. Pressure to get the job done quicker and overconfidence could very well be the key ingredients to a number of incidents that have occurred this year.

The important step that is taking place at this point is communication. While the number and seriousness of these recent incidents has been fairly well publicized throughout both the blasting industry and the fire service, it may be that the current high incident rate will start to reverse itself. Blasting contractors are now far more sensitized to how serious the Department of Fire Services considers these incidents. It should now be expected that additional attention is being given to both planning and execution of blasting projects. It is also not at all unreasonable to ask more questions about the planning than has gone into a blasting project at this point. Maintaining a strong focus on blasting safety is one key to reducing the incident rate that has occurred this year. ♦

First Graduates from *Safety & Survival - 2000 and Beyond* Training

Sixty (60) training officers from across the commonwealth received three days of intense, hands-on training. The training was conducted by Fire and Rescue Training Inc., a group of Chicago and FDNY fire officers. The *Firefighter Rescue and Survival Course* is designed to be a "hands on" performance-based course. Many of the skills have been backed up by actual fatality reports, injury incidents, and personal experiences of the instructors.

This 3-day, train-the-trainer course is delivered to training officers so that



they may return to their departments and train their own personnel. In addition to the training, each student receives a detailed lesson plan, drawings of training props, and a training plan. The enthusiasm that was demonstrated by the participants was extremely high. The picture was taken on

the final day of training and shows that this enthusiasm carried throughout the entire program.

Future offerings of this program are planned in western Mass., the north shore, and south shore. Refer to the calendar on your *Safety & Survival - 2000 and Beyond* poster for the dates. ♦

Blasting Detail Orientation Seminar Notes

Ten Blasting Detail Orientation Seminars have been conducted in recent months at various locations across the state. Due to the considerable blasting activity taking place, a number of fire departments have expressed interest in this program. The Office of the State Fire Marshal will do its best to continue to schedule more of these programs as time permits. Three are scheduled for January 2001; one each in Andover, Marlborough and Attleboro. These are scheduled for mornings 9:00 a.m. to 12 noon. Others are being planned for February and March.

Pre-Register Through MFA

An important note related to all of these programs is the need for pre-registrations. Once the program is advertised, registrations can be sent into the fire academy through the normal program registration process. These programs will follow the standard academy policy for minimum registration of 15 students in order for the program to be con-

ducted. With a large number of programs being conducted at all levels, effective utilization of resources is important.

It is highly recommended that if your department desires one of these programs, that surrounding departments be invited to participate through an advertisement flyer. With the large demand for seminar resources, more efficient scheduling of programs has to take place. While it is recognized that some departments have difficulty in sending firefighters to other towns for a program, it has become difficult to conduct numerous small programs for so many individual departments. The key point here is trying to achieve the most efficient use of time and resources. Take a look at the available space you have and let's try to fill it up. These are important programs that can continue to be conducted as long as we are more efficient. Remember, while "walk-ins" are always welcome, pre-registrations are very important for the successful planning of any program. ♦

National Fire Academy

The National Fire Academy is offering a *Command and Control of Fire Department Operations at Target Hazards* course for the first time in the VIP this year. We are trying to determine if there is enough interest to offer it on a regular basis in the VIP. This course is designed for command officers and company officers who may have command responsibilities at incidents involving target hazards in their communities. The VIP offering will be February 18-23, 2001. So far, very few VIP students have registered. If we do not receive sufficient VIP applications for the course, it will be opened up to the general applicant pool.

If you have specific questions about the content of the course, please contact Robert Murgallis at (301) 447-1347; or via e-mail at robert.murgallis@fema.gov. ♦

MFIRS CORNER

1999 M-BIRS Annual Report Available

The *1999 Annual Report of the Massachusetts Burn Injury Reporting System* is now available. This report analyses the burn injury reports submitted to the State Fire Marshal during 1999. All burns of 5% or more of the body surface area must, by law, be reported by hospitals or attending physicians. The goal of M-BIRS is to track arsonists who may injure themselves while setting a fire and then avoid detection by seeking medical treatment some distance from the fire scene. Although M-BIRS has assisted fire investigators to track down arsonists and often provided an additional piece of evidence, the majority of the burn injuries reported are hot liquid scalds to children under the age of five. This is a joint Mass. Department of Public Health-Department of Fire Services burn registry. This analysis is conducted so that we may together accurately target prevention strategies and measure their effectiveness. For copies of this report, please contact the Fire Data and Public Education Unit at (978) 567-3380. ♦

2000 MFIRS Fire Reports

All fire departments are asked to submit their 2000 fire incident reports in a timely manner - by the end of January 2001. This will allow us to perform quality control and let you know quickly about any errors. Timeliness is essential this year because of the transition to version 5.

Returned Reports

Fire departments are also encouraged to return to us any fire reports sent back to you for additional information. We will be generating a list of such missing in action reports for fire chiefs in mid-January.

Fatal Fires

We request paper copies of all fatal fire

incident and casualty reports. This helps us double and triple check that we have every fire death in the database and in the fatal fire log is used to report fire deaths monthly to the Secretary and the State Fire Marshal.

Subsequent Fatalities

Just as we try to keep you informed when a fire victim subsequently succumbs to their injuries, we encourage you to update your fire incident and casualty reports if a fire injury turns into a fire death. This is important no matter when it happens.

Update Causes After Investigation Closes

After an investigation closes, particularly into a fatal fire or a large loss fire, it is important to update the fire incident report if a final cause determination can now be made. ♦

Implementation of V5 of the MFIRS in 2001

On November 14, 2000, State Fire Marshal Stephen D. Coan sent a notice to all heads of fire departments about the implementation of Version 5 of the Massachusetts Fire Incident Reporting System. The text of that notice follows:

Massachusetts will implement version 5 of the National Fire Incident Reporting System on January 1, 2001 at 0001 hours. The Office of the State Fire Marshal will be ready to receive version 5 data starting the first of the year.

Because the federal government was unable to provide the Office of the State Fire Marshal with NFIRS software in July as they originally anticipated, we have been unable to test electronic data submissions from third party software vendors. This delay has not provided fire departments with enough time to make informed evaluations of version 5 software packages. **Therefore, calendar year 2001 will be an implemen-**

tation year. Fire departments will be permitted to submit version 4.1 data until they can successfully transition to version 5. You may, however, begin submitting version 5 data on January 1, 2001. If you need to delay implementation in order to complete training or to acquire software, please keep the Fire Data and Public Education Unit informed. You are encouraged to make the change as quickly as possible so that we can have the highest quality data possible. Converted data will not be as valuable. Every fire department must make the transition by December 31, 2001. ♦

Version 5 Training Materials

www.magnet.state.ma.us/dfs

All forms, Powerpoint presentations for training, and coding manuals are posted on the Department of Fire Services website. From the main page, click to fire data, version 5 and training tools.

Forms

The version 5 paper forms have been finalized and sent to the printers. They have been designed in Microsoft Word forms templates, so that any fire department with a personal computer could use them to electronically store and print fire incident reports. All of these forms are posted on the website for downloading. If you need to have these e-mailed to you, please contact the Fire Data Unit.

Quick Reference Guide

The final version of the Massachusetts Quick Reference Guide has also been printed and is available on the web page. One copy has been printed for every fire station and is now available. These have a goldenrod color covers to distinguish them from the green covered books used in the training sessions.

Full Reference Guide

When we discovered how many errors and discrepancies there were in the national version of the Quick Reference Guide (and inconsistencies with the national full reference guide), we decided to take the time to try to identify and correct as many of these problems as we could before publishing. We have not yet completed a similar review of the full National Reference Guide. It is available from the U.S. Fire Administration web page www.nfirs.fema.gov/refguide.htm, and

our own web page links to it. As soon as this review is complete, one copy will be printed and distributed to each fire department as the major reference book. In most cases, the *Quick Reference Guide* is all firefighters will need to complete the fire incident modules.

Insert Pages for Unique to Massachusetts Elements

On our website are pages to insert into the national full handbook for the unique to Massachusetts data elements. ♦

National Burn Awareness Week Feb 4-10, 2001

National Burn Awareness Week will be February 4-10, 2001.

This is another great opportunity to focus public attention on fire and burn prevention messages.

For the past several years, the S.A.F.E. Educators in western Mass. have participated in an educational event at the Shriners' Hospital for Crippled Children in Springfield that focuses on burn safety. ♦

Version 5 Software Vendors

The Fire Data Unit will work with any vendor that a fire department selects to ensure the ability to successfully submit MFIRS data electronically. For status of vendor certification by the U.S. Fire

Administration please check their website at www.fema.gov.

The following is a list of incident reporting software vendors known by the Fire Data Unit to have Massachu-

setts fire department customers and the status of their submission of test fires for electronic MFIRS V5 Reporting. ♦

VENDOR	Submitted File to OSFM?	Mass Certified?
FirePoint	✓	
Firehouse	✓	
Vernon	✓	
Pamet	✓	
KeyinfoSys	✓	
FirePrograms		
QED		
IMC		
Alpine		
ProberChief		
FireOne		
Microsystems		
Incident Tracker		

FIRE AND LIFE SAFETY EDUCATION

2000 Fire and Life Safety Educator of the Year

On the second day of the conference the 2000 Fire and Life Safety Educator of the Year was presented to North Attleborough Health Educator Prudence Bliss. The other outstanding nominees were recognized for their contributions to the field of fire and life safety education with certificates of achievement from the State Fire Marshal. They were: Deputy John Parker, Rehoboth Fire; Capt. Timothy S. Masloski, Amherst Fire; Patricia Lybarger, MSN, RN, Shriners Burn Hospital and Tom McGowan, Longmeadow Fire.

1st Special Fire Marshal's Award

This year a special Fire Marshal's Award was presented for the first time to Susan Burke and Carol Scott, two energetic nurses at Shriners Burn Hospital. ♦



Prudence Bliss of North Attleborough accepts the 2000 Fire and Life Safety Educator of the Year from Stephen D. Coan, State Fire Marshal.

6th Annual Fire and Life Safety Education Conference

The 6th Annual Fire and Life Safety Education Conference was held on September 25-26, 2000 at the Westford Regency Inn and Conference Center. Over 250 firefighters, nurses, teachers, elder service workers, police officers and health care professionals attended two-days of workshops on teaching fire and life safety. The theme for the conference was *Recipes for Success* and the goal was to provide skill development, exposure to core or new programs and curricula, and an opportunity to exchange ideas among life safety education professionals. ♦

Fire Safety Weekend at Cape Cod Mall

This event is organized by the Cape and Islands Fire Chiefs' and Fire Prevention Associations. It is a premier event initiated by fire departments across the state. The Department of Fire Services was delighted to be able to participate by staffing a booth at the Fire Safety Weekend at the Cape Cod Mall. ♦

Greater Boston Fire Prevention Coalition Goes to Revere

The Greater Boston Fire Prevention Coalition organized its annual educational event in Revere for the second year in a row. This hands-on program for children in grades K-3 reached over 300 children at the Paul Revere School teaching about smoke detectors, home escape plans, what firefighters look like when they fight a fire, how to crawl low under smoke, how to stop, drop and roll, and to stay away from matches, lighters and candles. The children loved interacting with real firefighters, seeing the gear, and the "witch" who, using a Hallowe'en theme, taught safety around matches, lighters and candles. They also enjoy having a Polaroid photo taken with Sparky the Fire Dog® and singing fire safety songs that reinforce the lessons.

The Coalition is made up of the Department of Fire Services, the National Fire Protection Association, KingAlarm (which donated fresh batteries to every child for their smoke alarms), the Mass. Property Insurance Underwriting Association (which fed the crew, supplied the film, cameras and photographers), the Mass. Department of Public Health, Shriners Burn Hospital (the Shriners sent volunteers and loaned pipe and drape from the auditorium in Wilmington), and Brigham and Women's Hospital. The Revere Fire Department provided trained firefighters as instructors and coordinated with the school department and PTA volunteers. The Coalition has been conducting this hands-on activity during October in greater Boston since 1991. ♦

Family Fire Safety Day at MDC's Houghton's Pond

The 5th Annual Family Fire Safety Day was held on September 16. Our co-sponsors, the Metropolitan District Commission were able to showcase the beautiful Houghton's Pond Reservation in Milton. About 1,000 people attended to view the modern and antique fire apparatus, pick up fire safety information, listen to a jazz band, or ride in a horse-drawn hay wagon. The event featured fun and educational activities for children to learn about fire safety. ♦



Fire Prevention Week: October 8-14, 2000

Papa Gino's Open Houses

Ninety-eight (98) open houses sponsored by Papa Gino's Inc. were held across Massachusetts during October. These open houses are a great vehicle for the community to visit the fire house, learn about the many different services the fire department provides and for the fire service to provide community education about fire and injury prevention. By providing food, Papa Gino's contributes an added "hook" to draw members of the community, as well as more substantive aid such as banners and educational handouts.

Winning Posters at the State House

The winning posters from the Mass. Property Insurance Underwriting

Association's annual contest were displayed in the State House during Fire Prevention Week. These posters are compiled into a calendar and the winners from each level appear on the covers of the annual report of the Mass. Fire Incident Reporting System.

S.A.F.E. Grants Awarded On Time - During FPW

The Department of Fire Services was able to meet its goal of processing S.A.F.E. grant applications through the review process and issue grant award letters during Fire Prevention Week. In order to process the wire transfers, the Fiscal Affairs office requires: 1) a signed contract, 2) a revised budget worksheet, if you received less than your request and 3) a completed end of year report if you received a grant in

fiscal year 2000. If you have not yet received your funds, double check that these items are all set. You should also check with the town's fiscal officer. You may also call Beth Hill in our Fiscal Affairs office - (978)567-3141 - to find out when the money was wired.

Training for Public Fire and Life Safety Educators

The last week of October ended with another week-long training class of fire and life safety educators. This class is offered by the MFA and supported by the S.A.F.E. staff. Educators finished the week excited, motivated and feeling like it was a week of their time well spent. ♦

Do You Have Your **FREE** *Remembering When* Yet?

Does your department have it's free copy of NFPA's Remembering When: A Fire and Fall Prevention Program for Older Adults?

The "Remembering When" program is available to all fire departments in Massachusetts compliments of the Massachusetts Property

Insurance Underwriting Association "FAIR PLAN". The programs were originally distributed to fire departments as they attended one of the in-service training classes co-sponsored by the Office of the State Fire Marshal and the Mass. Coalition of Councils on Aging and the Mass. Department of Public Health. If your department did

not attend one of the in-services and you would like your free copy, you may stop by the Public Education Unit at the Department of Fire Services or you may contact Charlie Johnson by phone @ 978-567-3388 or by e-mail @ charles.johnson@state.ma.us to make arrangements for delivery. ♦

The following fire departments have not received their "Remembering When" Program:

Acushnet	Clinton	Heath	Northfield	Stoneham
Agawam	Cohasset	Hingham	Oak Bluffs	Stow
Alford	Colrain	Hinsdale	Oakham	Sturbridge
Andover	Concord	Hubbardston	Onset	Sudbury
Aquinnah	Conway	Hull	Orange	Templeton
Arlington	Dartmouth #1	Kingston	Otis	Tewksbury
Ashburnham	Dartmouth #2	Lake Pleasant	Oxford	Three Rivers
Ashby	Dartmouth #3	Lancaster	Paxton	Tisbury
Ashfield	Dedham	Lawrence	Pelham	Townsend
Ashland	Deerfield	Lee	Pembroke	Truro
Athol	Devens	Lenox	Pepperell	Turners Falls
Auburn	Dighton	Leverett	Petersham	Tyngsboro
Avon	Dover	Leyden	Phillipston	Tyringham
Barnstable	Dudley	Longmeadow	Pittsfield	Wales
Barre	Dunstable	Ludlow	Provincetown	Warren
Becket	Duxbury	Lunenburg	Quincy	Warwick
Bedford	East Bridgewater	Lynn	Randolph	Watertown
Bellingham	East Longmeadow	Lynnfield	Raynham	Webster
Belmont	Easthampton	Manchester	Rehoboth	Wellesley
Beverly	Edgartown	Marion	Revere	Wellfleet
Blackstone	Egremont	Marshfield	Rochester	Wendell
Blandford	Erving	Mashpee	Rockland	W. Barnstable
Bolton	Essex	Massport	Rowe	W. Bridgewater
Bondsville	Fitchburg	Medfield	Rowley	W. Brookfield
Boxborough	Franklin	Medford	Royalston	W. Newbury
Boxford	Gardner	Medway	Salem	W. Springfield
Boylston	Gill	Melrose	Sandisfield	W. Stockbridge
Braintree	Gosnold	Methuen	Sandwich	W. Tisbury
Bridgewater	Grafton	Millbury	Saugus	Westhampton
Brimfield	Great Barrington	Monroe	Savoy	Westport
Brockton	Greenfield	Montague	Sharon	Weymouth
Brookfield	Groveland	Monterey	Sheffield	Whately
Buckland	Hadley	Nantucket	Shelburne	Whitman
Burlington	Halifax	New Ashford	Sherborn	Williamsburg
Canton	Hamilton	New Braintree	Shutesbury	Wilmington
Carlisle	Hampden	New Marlborough	Somerville	Winthrop
Carver	Hancock	New Salem	S. Deerfield	Worcester
Centerville	Hardwick	Newburyport	S. Hadley- #2	Worthington
Charlemont	Harwich	Newton	Southampton	Wrentham
Chelmsford	Hatfield	North Andover	Sterling	
Chilmark	Hawley	North Brookfield	Stockbridge	

Massachusetts Tries to Snuff Out Candle Fires

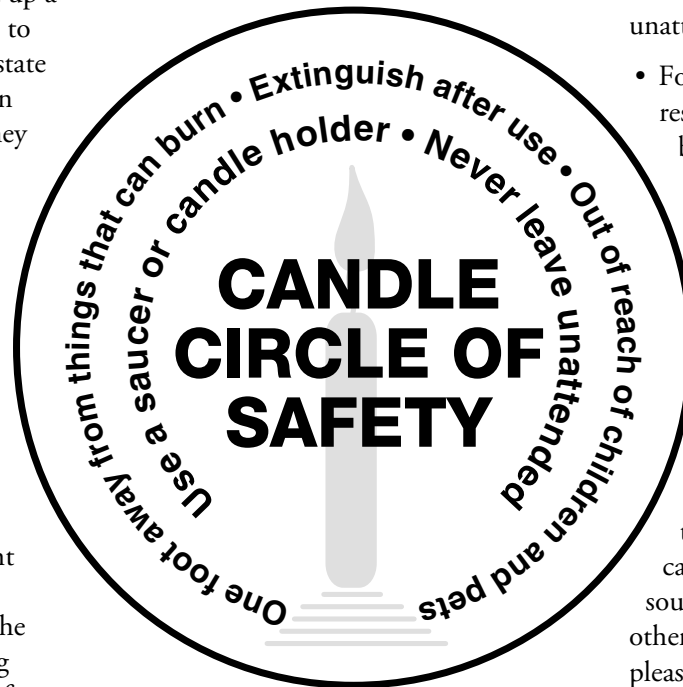
Recognizing that candle fires nearly tripled in Massachusetts during the nineties, State Fire Marshal Stephen Coan asked the *Mass. Public Fire and Safety Education Task Force* to look into the issue and make recommendations. The Task Force set up a *Candle Subcommittee* that began to research the issue by looking at state and national fire data analyses on candle fires. What room were they starting in? Bedrooms? Dining Rooms? Bathrooms? How were they starting? Were children playing with fire? Were pets knocking them over? Were curtains blowing into the flames? Between the fire data analysis and these firefighters' experience with candle fires in their own communities, they developed five key candle fire safety messages. The Department of Fire Services helped them to create a logo that incorporated the messages into a visually engaging graphic – the candle *Circle of Safety*. The five messages are:

- First, and most important, burn candles inside of a one-foot circle of safety, free of anything that can burn.
- Extinguish the candle after use.
- Keep candles out of reach of children and pets.
- Use a saucer or candleholder.
- Never leave burning candles unattended.

State Candle Safety Awareness Day

This year, the Massachusetts Legislature passed a bill that the governor signed, establishing the second Monday in December as a statewide Candle Safety Awareness Day. The impetus for the day was a first grade at the Nathaniel Morton Elementary School in Plymouth, and their teacher Wendy

Longo. The first graders focused on the fact that a candle started last December's tragic Worcester fire. They asked their state representative to create a candle safety awareness day to teach everyone in the community about



candle fire safety.

Establishing such a day will give fire educators a rallying point around which to focus a candle fire safety campaign. Leading candle manufacturers and retailers across the state, used Candle Safety Awareness Day as a focus for their own customer education efforts.

Partnership with NFPA: Joint Study Released

The need for more information spawned the idea of the follow-up survey. State Fire Marshal Coan was delighted to partner with the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) on this project. In order to develop effective public education strategies, we needed to know whom to target and with what message. The joint NFPA-OSFM project was designed to answer questions not provided by currently available national candle data. There is

a lot of anecdotal evidence that we needed to validate or disprove with a more formal study.

Major findings from the report are:

- Three-quarters (or 75%) of the fires occurred when the candle was left unattended.
- Forty percent (40%) of the fires resulted from combustible materials being too close to the candle.
- Teenagers face the greatest risk of candle fires. Although teens account for only 9% of the state population, 21% of the state candle fires were attributed to them. Two-thirds of candle users, however, were between 20 and 64 years old.
- Ninety-eight percent (98%) of the candles used in Massachusetts candle fires were not needed as sources of light, but were used for other purposes such as decoration, pleasure or mood.

According to the most recent national statistics from the NFPA (1997), home fires and associated injuries caused by home candle use in the United States have doubled since 1990. In addition, the number of deaths attributed to home candle fires is at an all time high. The national data also indicates twice as many home candle fires in December as in an average month.

"Candles need supervision. The fact that someone was present in 25% of the Massachusetts candle fires is a reminder that when candles are burning, we need to be alert and not let them simply become part of the background," said Marty Ahrens, NFPA Research Analyst.

For more information on home candle fires, a copy of the report or holiday safety tips, visit NFPA's website at www.nfpa.org or the Massachusetts Department of Fire Services website at www.magnet.state.ma.us/dfs. ♦

Space Heater Fire Safety

Space Heater Fires in 1999

Forty-four space heater fires were reported to the Office of the State Fire Marshal in 1999. These forty-four space heater fires caused six civilian injuries, eight fire fighter injuries and an estimated dollar loss of \$643,176. Forty-one percent of these fires were caused by combustible materials such as bedding, rubbish or furniture that were too close to the heater, 9% were caused by lack of maintenance and another 9% were caused by other electrical failure.

Safety Tips

If you must use a space heater for heat, use it as safely as possible.

- When buying a heater, look for one that has been tested and labeled by a nationally recognized testing company.
- Keep the heater away from drapes, furniture or other flammable materials. Place it on a level surface away from areas where someone might bump it and knock it over.
- If you must use an extension cord, make sure it is a heavy duty cord marked with a power rating at least as high as that on the label of the heater itself. (These are usually orange colored.)
- Never leave a space heater unattended or running while you sleep.
- Keep electric heaters away from water. Never use them near a sink or in the bathroom.
- The sale and use of unvented kerosene heaters is illegal in Massachusetts.



FireFACTORS

Office of the State Fire Marshal
Commonwealth of Massachusetts

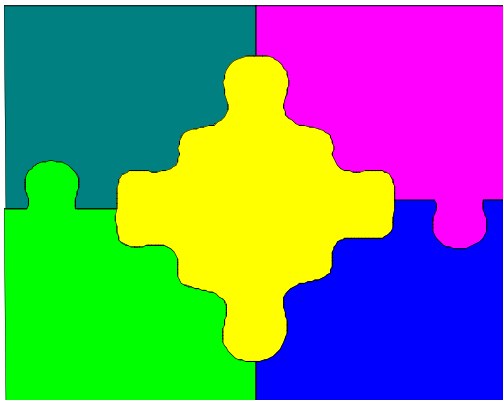
P.O. Box 1025, State Road • Stow, Massachusetts 01775 • 508 567-3300

FIRE INVESTIGATION UNIT NEWS

Team Concept of Fire Investigation Proves Effective- Again!

An arson fire that started around 4 a.m. on Saturday, November 11, 2000 in a Stoneham carpet store was quickly solved and two youths arrested as a result of classic teamwork between the Stoneham Fire Department, Stoneham Police Department and State Police assigned to the North Team in the DFS Fire and Explosion Investigation Section. Stoneham Police who arrived to manage traffic and crowds at the fire scene were alert and quick to pick up on the presence of two youths that had caused several disturbances in the area already that evening-early morning. They also noticed evidence in the roadway that indicated a burglary or vandalism had occurred at the carpet store. The fire scene investigation concluded that the fire was intentionally set. When asked to explain the evening's activities and the evidence during interviews, the youths made statements that led investigators to charge them with breaking and entering a motor vehicle, larceny, malicious destruction of property, breaking and entering with intent to commit a felony, burning a building, and vandalism to a church.

Mutual aid was received from the Reading, Woburn and Wakefield Fire Departments to battle this early morning blaze.



Solving Chelsea Arson Nets California Parole Violator

A fire occurred on October 11, 2000 at 11 a.m. in a 3-decker on Marlboro Street in Chelsea. Four firefighters were injured battling this blaze, one seriously. Four people were home at the time of the fire on the first and second floors and were all able to safely evacuate. The first floor resident heard banging and went into the rear hall. A unfamiliar woman ran past her yelling "fire", ran through her first floor apartment and out the front door. A short time later a Chelsea Police officer encountered a drunken woman who said she had just come from the fire. This woman was identified by the first floor resident as the strange woman who had run through her apartment. The cause and origin investigation determined that the fire was deliberately set on the third floor with three separate points of origin. During an interview, the woman made statements that led investigators to arrest her for arson. The woman indicated she had lived in the apartment once previously, and had been kicked by the others who lived there. The night of the fire, she had gotten drunk and gone to the apartment. After being arrested, she admitted her real name and date of birth to investigators who checked and found that she had an outstanding warrant for parole violation in California, as well as an extensive record in three states.

This was another classic case of local police and local fire and State Police fire investigators working hand in glove.



Two Other Interesting Cases Solved

A November 3, 2000 Townsend fire was determined to be set by a woman suspected by her family to be in the early stages of Alzheimer's disease. She had apparently ignited both ends of her couch and then attempted to put it out with cups of water while yelling for her grown sons.

An Haverhill arson that took place on September 6 in a multifamily dwelling was quickly solved by Haverhill Police and Fire with assistance from State Police fire investigators. A handicapped individual was trapped on the third floor by fire and was rescued by Haverhill firefighters. This fire could so easily have become a fatal one. The intentionally set fire was ignited in the first floor rear apartment. Investigators believe the motive for setting the fire was a drug-deal gone sour. ♦

AST Deadline Extended to June 1st

On December 1, 2000, State Fire Marshal Coan issued a memorandum to interested parties, announcing an extension of time for owners of certain above ground storage tanks to file annual inspection reports.

Due to the present heating fuel situation during the cold weather season, the Office of the State Fire Marshal has extended the date within which owners or operators must submit the required annual inspection reports for existing aboveground storage tanks of more than 10,000 gallons' capacity. 502 CMR 5.06 (3), originally mandated that the Marshal's annual inspection reports be submitted to the Marshal's office on or before 12-1-2000. The extension, which was initiated by a new emergency regula-

tory amendment effective, 12-1-00, now allows these reports to be submitted on or before 6-1-01.

This 6-1-01 date is a new deadline to submit the inspection reports. However, the Office of the State Fire Marshal will continue to accept completed reports at this time and encourages tank owners and operators to submit the reports as soon as possible and not wait until the last minute of the new deadline

It should be noted that the provisions of the regulation which mandate regularly scheduled self-inspection and comprehensive record requirements for such tanks remains effective on 12-1-00 (502 CMR 5.05). ♦

The DFS Quarterly is published every March, June, September, and December. If you have some newsworthy information to share with the fire service, you are welcome to submit articles to: Jennifer Mieth, Editor, DFS Quarterly, Dept. of Fire Services, P.O. Box 1025, Stow, MA 01775. (978) 567-3381 or Internet Address: Jennifer.Mieth@state.ma.us

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